



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025 by J Kirkaldy BSc (Hons) PGDip MRTPI

Decision by L C Hughes BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/B1550/D/25/3373679

7 Keswick Avenue, Hullbridge, Essex SS5 6JL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Limber against the decision of Rochford District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/00522/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a loft conversion incorporating flat roofed front dormer and rooflights to rear.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a loft conversion incorporating flat roofed front dormer and rooflights to rear at 7 Keswick Avenue, Hullbridge SS5 6JL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/00522/FUL, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: ADP519EP 03 A, ADP519EP 00.
 - 3) The external materials of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. I note there is a discrepancy between the original description of the development as shown on the planning application form and that used by the Council on the decision notice. I have taken the description of the development in the banner heading above from the Council's decision notice, as it provides a more accurate description of the appeal proposal, which I note the appellants have also adopted with the Grounds of Appeal.

Main Issue

4. The Council has not objected to the proposed rear rooflights. I have no reason to disagree. My recommendation therefore focuses on the effect of the proposed flat roof front dormer on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Keswick Avenue features a linear arrangement of predominately single storey semi-detached dwellings on both sides. Although the dwellings generally exhibit coherence in scale and appearance, there are sporadic and clustered examples of front flat roof dormers within the street scene, introducing a degree of variation in roof forms.
6. The Rochford District Council Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document 2 (2007) (SPD2) provides guidance on the design of dormers and recommends the use of pitched roofs on front and side dormers. The Essex Design Guide (2018) advises that dormers should not dominate the roof space.
7. The proposed front dormer would have a flat roof. However, whilst the proposal would increase the scale and mass of the existing dwelling, the design would respect its appearance as it would not extend the full width of the property, project above the ridge height or beyond the roof. It would not represent a dominant feature within the front roof slope that would be visually harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling.
8. The proposal would disrupt the visual balance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings in which the appeal property is located. However, during my site visit, I observed similar arrangements nearby, including the pair of semi-detached dwellings opposite and another further along the road at No.11, both of which incorporate front flat roof dormers. Given the context of the area with flat roof dormers already forming part of the established character, the proposal would not appear conspicuously out of keeping within the context of the existing street scene.
9. The Council refer to the existing flat roof dormers within the street suggesting that the majority were approved prior to the SPD2 guidance and the current Rochford District Council Development Management Plan (2014) (DMP). They also refer to three flat roof dormers, stating these were granted planning permission in 2018 and 2021 under a different policy context, although full details of these cases have not been provided. However, I note that SPD2, Rochford District Council Core Strategy (CS) (2011) and DMP were all adopted prior to 2018 and therefore would have been relevant in considering those applications.
10. My attention has been drawn to a dismissed appeal for a 'Hip to gable roof extension with front dormers' at 37 Broadlands Avenue, Hockley¹. Whilst I do not have the full details of this case, I note the description of the proposal is different to that of the appeal proposal. In any event, I have considered this appeal on the evidence before me merits and the site specific circumstances.
11. Concerns have been raised that the proposal would set a harmful precedent. However, a generalised concern of this nature does not justify withholding permission in this case. It is necessary for me to consider this appeal on its own merits, and I have found it to be acceptable and in accordance with policy.
12. Whilst the proposal would not strictly comply with all parts of SPD2 and the Essex Design Guide, these documents provide guidance rather than policy. Whilst they are a material consideration, in this instance I am satisfied that the appeal scheme

¹ APP/B1550/D/22/3302317

would be broadly consistent with their overall objective of ensuring that developments are well designed and appropriate to their setting and context.

13. Overall, the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling or the surrounding. It would accord with Policy CP1 of the CS which promotes high quality design and DMP Policy DM1 which requires development to promote the character of the locality ensuring that it positively contributes to the surrounding built environment. Part (x) of Policy DM1 specifically requires a positive relationship with existing and nearby dwellings. Furthermore, it would accord with chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework in respect of achieving well-designed places.

Conditions

14. Standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and for works to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans are necessary for enforcement purposes and the avoidance of doubt.
15. In the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area, a condition requiring the external materials of the extension to match those used in the existing building is necessary.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. For the reasons given above, the appeal would comply with the development plan and as such I recommend that it should be allowed.

J Kirkaldy

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is allowed.

L C Hughes

INSPECTOR